



BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 5, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am a professor in the Department of Biology of the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao (UPRH) and as part of Molecular and Cell Biology class we have revamped our curriculum with an experience on Scientific Citizens. I am enclosing the letters of my students where they are exercising their rights as citizens of Puerto Rico currently suffering the extreme increases in their registration fees and other services at the UPRH. We are requesting your mediation to request that the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) declares the University of Puerto Rico as an essential service to the island and that way stop the extreme measurements taken against our public university system.

I am a first-generation student; my father only had a high school diploma and my mom never completed her first year of college. Even though we come from a low-income home, thanks to the UPR system me and my three brothers currently have a degree. Many students today are in the same situation and we are sending you their testimonials in the enclosed letters. We understand the university system needs to change, but the current actions only affect the students not the administrators that are the ones in control of the UPR economy and most expenses.

We as a community are requesting that the FOMB evaluate the current plan and stop the imminent raise in the registration costs to a double in just two months. On a recent meeting the UPR Board of Trustees passed a resolution to such ends. Students do not have time to do such adjustments and like you will read in the following letters, if the registration doubles a grand percentage of the student body will not have any funds to attend the UPRH. A country without educated professionals will not be able to produce which at the end will continue the emigration of "brains". A deserted island will not pay any debt. On the contrarily if they invest in education, educated Puerto Ricans will come back and the economy of the island will flourish. We hope you will hear our plea. If you want further information, please contact me at [REDACTED] or my cell phone [REDACTED]. Thank you for the time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lilliam Casillas Martínez".

Lilliam Casillas Martínez, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]

**UPR**  
HUMACAO

May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007


Dear Judge Taylor:

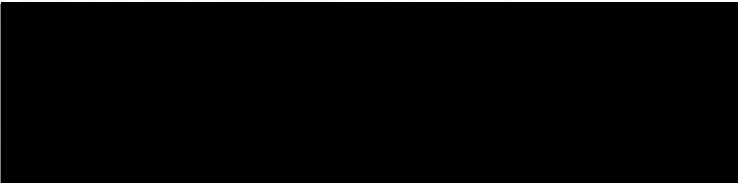
I am an undergraduate student from the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao. I am currently in my third year of Bachelor's degree in Microbiology. I am also a first generation student; my father only had a High School diploma and my mom only completed an Associate Degree. I have a work and study job in the University. I live in an urban area at Humacao, Puerto Rico. I have electricity, but the system is still unstable. I receive a Pell Grant support of \$2,770 yearly, but my expenses include: \$1,920 in transportation, \$735 in books, and \$2,160 on food.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen Scientists and how such this movement is changing the United States future. We want to be a part of such movement, because it is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists, but also as active members of its communities. Currently, I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB), the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. These increase in the credits of the University of Puerto Rico will cause a decrease in the enrollment of students. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means that I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months. Besides that, I will need to get an additional job or postpone my education as I do not have the funds needed to pay for it. If I need to get a loan, I prefer to do it in the US, because it is better than to get one in Puerto Rico. Consequently, I will migrate with my family to New Haven, Connecticut because my brother lives there and he would help me at least with housing.

My petition is simple, to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential services needed for Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the rights to education that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico deserve. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and to not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with whoever is needed and evaluate whatever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Sincerely,

  
Rubén X. Guzmán Ubiles







BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 24, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

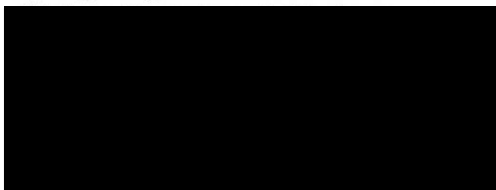
I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the General Biology. I am a first generation student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I currently have a job with the program Study and Work in the university. I live in Caguas and my house received a lot of damage and electricity often comes and goes. I receive full Pell Grant support but my expenses include: food, transportation and books which are incredibly expensive.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these desitions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will emigrate with my family to Florida.

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with whoever is needed and evaluate whatever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

  
Irving Burgos Vélez





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 24, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my five year of the Physics applied to electronics bachelor. I am a first generation African American in my family. I live in rural Humacao. I got the light just a month ago. I do not receive a Pell Grant support but my expenses include: \$80 a month transportation, \$60 books, \$40 comida among others.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these desitions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will emigrate with my family to Florida.

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Lizyan Mendoza

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lizyan E. Mendoza". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

Physics applied to electronics Department, Student





Mayo 23 de 2018

Honorable Jueza Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Querida Taylor Swain:

Actualmente soy estudiante de la UPR en Humacao donde ejerzo un bachillerato en biología general. Al momento me encuentro cursando mi tercer año de carrera, pero mis planes son seguir estudiando.

En los últimos meses el Gobierno de Puerto Rico y sus allegados han estado planeando subir la matricula de la UPR (la cual es una universidad publica y hasta el momento bastante conveniente para todas aquellas personas de bajo ingreso o con dificultades) de \$55 a \$150 el crédito, lo cual es casi el triple de lo que es actualmente. No me parece justo que le limiten tanto a una persona llegar a obtener al menos un bachillerato.

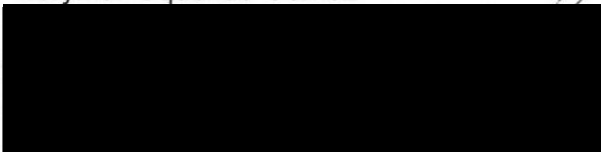
La situación en Puerto Rico no es buena y las personas que no tienen al menos un bachillerato se les hace muy difícil conseguir un trabajo para sostenerse o tal vez sostener una familia. He visto personas con un grado aprobado y aun así se les hace difícil.

Debe haber otra manera de solucionar el problema que los llevo a pensar en que el aumento de la matricula sería una buena solución. Lo que sucede es que pensar en esa solución no es trabajo de nosotros. Estoy segura de que no somos responsables del problema que hay tampoco.

Le hago llegar esta carta ya que me parece conveniente que personas que no son parte de Puerto Rico sepan de la situación y dejen saber sus opiniones luego de saber las nuestras.



Norymar Oquendo Gómez





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 23, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

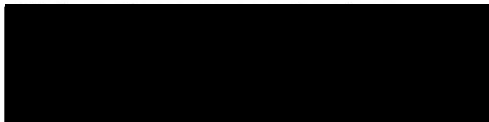
I'm currently a student of microbiology in the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao's department of Biology. As a participant of Prof. Lilliam Casillas' Molecular and Cell Biology class we were informed of the Scientific Citizens movement as part of our curriculum. I write to you not only as a university student without the benefit of a scholarship to study, but also as the citizen of a country undergoing an economic crisis cause by corruption, oppression and the mismanagement of funds in our education system. Because of this, my current classmates and I write to you for your mediation so that the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) declares our university (University of Puerto Rico) as an essential service to our country in order to stop the drastic credit measurements that would impede many youths from obtaining formal education beyond high school.

I'm a student whose father can barely support his son due to him leaving the family and not having a proper education to maintain a stable job. As a consequence, my mother was the one who supported financially the both of us, she had a bachelor's degree which granted her a job in a medicine production factory. After losing her job due to the company shutting down she had to take a loan to complete her post graduate studies in order to support the two of us. The current changes that the government is imposing on our public university system would only make it harder for me to finish my bachelor's degree and reach post graduate education. Moreover, many of my fellow classmates are terrified of the idea that they might have to leave the university and their studies due to the more than double the credit raise that will happen next semester. These changes will only contribute to more students leaving the island in hopes of better chances of education, so we hope your intervention will be for the better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RAL", written over a horizontal line.

Raoul A. Lebron Rivera.







BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 22, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am a student of the University of Puerto Rico, Humacao in my fourth year of the General Biology. I have a job in a gas station. I live in the urban area of Luquillo, Puerto Rico. After hurricane Maria, I was around five months without electricity. I receive a Pell Grant support approximately of 5,500 but my expenses include: transportation, books, food, study materials, phone and essential items.

As part of the molecular cellular course one of the lessons is to learn how to be a good scientific citizen. This implies bringing our knowledge as university scientists to schools and young children so that they have the interest to study science. Currently, as part of being a good citizen, it is my desire to let you know the conditions in which we are studying.

The University of Puerto Rico is the low cost university in the country. This is help for poor people who want to study and economically cannot or young people like me in the middle class where we still have difficult studies because of the cost involved, even more so that I have decided to pursue graduate studies. As a request from the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$ 55 to \$ 115 with an increase in other services as well. This increase is very significant since we are expecting triple what we are currently waiting for. This includes that I must use my entire scholarship to pay tuition fees and that you may have until you take my money that the scholarship will not give me. It is not just for me, also people who do not have financial aid and pay their studies with the salary of their parents are currently making it difficult, with the increase for the next enrollment many of them can not study.

My request is that they consider the education of the University of Puerto Rico as a priority to study at a low cost. It is a tool for the young people of the island who want to get ahead and have a professional future, an issue that is being limited to certain people with the increase in credit. I also believe that the members of the BTU and the FOMB should have this commitment and the vision of an education for all, looking for an alternative that does not affect the students at this level. With all the respect and cordiality they deserve.

Ashley Figueroa Molina

Biology Department Student

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ashley Figueroa", written in dark ink.



BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 21, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

My name is Nicole J. Báez Tjonafoek. I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao, just weeks away from finishing the fourth year of my bachelor's degree in General Biology. For the past four years, as part of the Swimming Team of the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao, I have had a tuition exemption that has paid for my studies. Currently, my sister is finishing the second year of her bachelor's degree in General Biology in the UPRH. If it isn't for the tuition exemption that we both receive to pay our studies, we would have to take loans to pay for long-term education. I would like to emphasize that if it were not for the UPR system my parents wouldn't have had a degree.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Scientific Citizens and how such movement is changing the US future. I want to be a part of such movement, I believe it's important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of our communities. Education is one of the most powerful tools that every human being needs to change its future. It is something that will not only benefit the person that have it, but also the world around them. It is the investment that a country makes for its people. Well educated people are a signal of progress in a society and in the family.

Currently I can become educated thanks to the low tuition fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) imminently increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. We understand the university system needs to change, but what worries us the most is that the current actions only affect the students not the administrators that are the ones in control of the UPR economy and most of the expenses.

My petition is simple; (1) To request the FOMB to consider the UPR system an essential service to Puerto Rico, (2) For the BTU members to design a program that will protect the right to an education for the low-income families of Puerto Rico, (3) Legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter.

Nicole Báez Tjonafoek







BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 21, 2018

Honorable Judge Laura Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor Swain:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the Microbiology program; also I have a twin brother who study Mechanical Engineering at the Mayaguez Campus. I am a second generation student being my parents a first generation university students who also studied at UPR. My expenses totaling \$3,120.00 per semester.

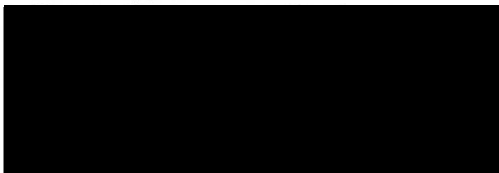
Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, underline that "education is not only a human right, it is also a prerequisite for the development of society and the individual".

My reality is that in order to become educated toward a bachelor degree in sciences, I chose the UPR not only for its quality but as a government institution with affordable registration fees. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the tuition costs to over 100%. This evidence that education remains a privilege rather than a right where citizens who wants to get accessible education are been threatened by a small group of decision makers. This exacerbate in Puerto Rico's degraded economy. Such decisions will reduce participation and diversity especially among Puerto Ricans where the level of poverty is 44%.

That been said, I request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service and an investment to Puerto Rico's higher education and to recognized the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Sincerely,

  
Etan Dieppa-Colon





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 21, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my fourth year of the General Biology Bachelor's Degree. I live with my mother, stepfather and 14 years old sister. My mother and stepdad both are currently unemployed since we were all affected by the hurricane that recently devastated Puerto Rico named María. They both had found alternative ways to assure an income to the family. My mother has been selling homemade fried turnovers ("pastelillos") of meat and chicken and my stepfather has been selling ice creams. Also, my mother, stepfather and I, are cursing undergraduate studies, which haven't been easy for the family to manage in many aspects. I have a job in the university at the OSEI office where I assist other university students with different disabilities, I also receive a Pell Grant support. With both incomes of my own I manage to cover transportation, books, school materials, food, pay my studies, and help in any needs of my family.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course, we have been learning about the relevance of Citizen Scientists and how such movement is changing the world future. As a student aware of our societies situation, I want to be part of such movement. I believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists or students but also as active members of our communities. Empowerment our communities, educating all our generations, motivating and making them aware of different actual situations that must be a concern to every people are needs right now.

Currently I can become educated, and yet to graduate, thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR System. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) established to increase the credit from \$55 to \$115 for the August 2018 Semester. These includes an increase in other services as well such as laboratories and technologies fees. This obviously affect many students which may have to decide whether to keep studying or not. These means I need to use all my Pell Grant in only two months, which I use for my education, all my needs related to my student life and livelihood. I will most probably need to get an additional job or postpone my education as I will not have the funds to pay for my enrollment in August 2018 Semester. The University of Puerto Rico at Humacao is the UPR campus with more students of low income and a higher poverty level. None of these decisions affects the administrators of any level and their salaries, only affect our present and future professionals, which means the working class of Puerto Rico

My petition is to request the FOMB and the Puerto Rico Government to consider the UPR System and the scholar education an essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right to an education for the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico. Budget changes will be more efficiently made readjusting administrative funds and/or positions



which receive a lot more money than what they need. By redirecting that money to educative matters will mean improving our higher education system and, consequently, building a stronger Puerto Rico.

Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. We only have two months to register for the next August 2018 Semester.

*Nicolmarie Torres Olmeda*  
Nicolmarie Torres Olmeda





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 18, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the Microbiology. I am a second generation student, in my home I am not the only one in college and my income is less than 20,000 per year. Currently my mother who is in charge of my economy is unemployed because the place where she worked. I live in the rural area of Yabucoa. To date, I do not have electricity service. I receive a grant from Pell Grant of 5,000 but my expenses include: 500-600 in books and on some occasions, I have to help my mother with the house expenses because the mortgage on the house is around 1,000 monthlies.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. One of the reasons I chose to enter the UPR system was because of the teaching quality it has besides the low cost it has, which is a little flexible for my mother's pocket. consequently, I will have to take a letter in the matter and do something that is for my benefit without harming me but by taking the decision to emigrate I would do it without my family and go to a university in the United States as in Philadelphia. This increase also harms the new income because they prefer to move to an institution that does not want to raise their credits spontaneous.

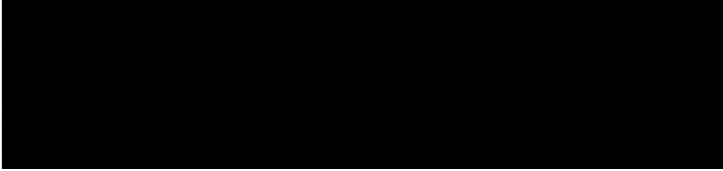
My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. In our university system you can look for alternatives of general money through the concentrations of students where they are able to offer their services to the community where we as a system benefit and not have to triplicate the cost of the credits because We are left with low resources or those who have it that are not going to be able to pay a high-increase enrollment. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only



have two months to register.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'KB' with a large loop and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kimberly Beltrán Rodríguez





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



Mayo 18, 2018

Honorable Jueza Taylor Swain  
Estados Unidos Courthouse  
Nueva York, NY 10007

Querida Jueza Taylor:

Me dirijo a usted con respeto para informarle mi situacion, soy estudiante activa de la Universidad de Puerto Rico-Humacao, curso mi quinto año en Biología General. En mi familia somos tres hermanas y las tres estudiamos actualmente en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, donde obtuvimos la oportunidad de poder estudiar ya que es la universidad que soñamos y es la que económicamente podemos cubrir. Actualmente no trabajamos, si no que nos dedicamos a estudiar y gracias a la beca Pell que se nos brindo es que podemos cubrir nuestros estudios. Somos natalmente de Canóvanas y necesitamos poder cubrir los gastos de gasolina, comida y materiales de estudio como libros, libretas, lápices, entre otros.

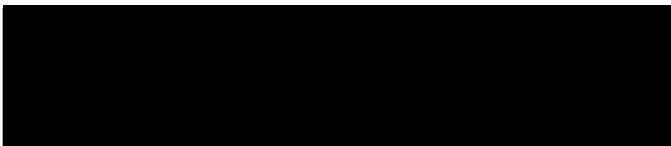
Como parte de nuestro curso de Biología Molecular y celular hemos aprendido sobre la importancia de los científicos del ciudadano y cómo este movimiento está cambiando el futuro de Estados Unidos. Queremos ser parte de este movimiento, creemos que es importante que sirva de Puerto Rico no sólo científicos sino también como miembros activos de sus comunidades.

Actualmente se nos notifico que el semestre que viene nos aumentaran el credito de \$55 a \$115 y abra un aumento en otros servicios. Estos aumentos me afectan ya que no tengo un ingreso, lo que me implicaria conseguir un empleo donde pueda obtener esa cantidad de dinero para cubrir esos gastos, mas los gastos en mis necesidades como gasolina, libros y materiales de la universidad. Es notable que ninguno de estos cambios afecta a los administradores ni sus salarios. Pero a muchos de nosotros los estudiantes significa que quiza debamos post poner nuestra educación ya que no tenemos los fondos.

Mi petición es que se considere el Sistema de la UPR un servicio esencial para Puerto Rico y que se diseñe un programa que protegerá el derecho de que las familias de bajos ingresos de la región noreste de Puerto Rico pueda solicitar la educación. Eliminar cargos administrativos y no afectarnos a nosotros o a nuestros planteles si no a los que legislan. Estoy disponible para reunirme con quien sea necesario y evaluar el cambio y lo que propone el plan actual. Gracias por su pronta atención a este asunto.

*N. M. N. R.*

Nicole M. Nieves Ramos







BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 17, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my senior year of General Biology. I am a first-generation student to graduate with a bachelor's in General Biology and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I work once a week as a personal housekeeper for a couple who work from home. I live in rural in ceiba, twice a week the electricity goes for hours affecting my studies during those days. I receive a Pell Grant support of \$2,220.00 but my expenses include: \$60 weekly (\$240 monthly) transportation (gas), \$300 in books and materials, \$100 approximately in copies.

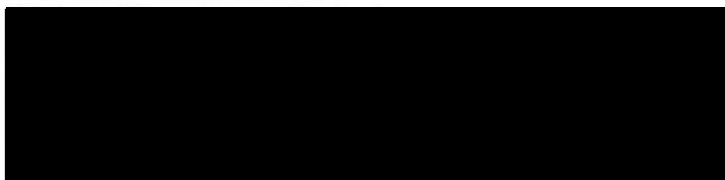
As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to obtain an education and graduate with my bachelor's degree in June thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. This meaning I'd need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or postpone my education as I do not have the funds to pay the credits of courses at the price of \$115. I decided to return in August 2018 to achieve a degree in Microbiology, having to pay the courses on my own. If the price of the credits increases, I am not sure how I'll be able to afford, and I'd have to find a second or third job in which could affect my studies. The increase will postpone my goal in achieving a second degree.

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bj Martinez".

Bianca J Martinez Ortiz





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 17, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico, Humacao campus. I am in my third year of studies towards a bachelor's degree in General Biology. I am a first-generation student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I live in Juncos in a family of four, a single parent, two fulltime college students and one elementary student. Because of hurricane Maria we had some difficulties like having no electricity for almost six months, being unemployed for months, etc. I receive a Pell Grant support of \$5,000, but my expenses apart from tuition includes: gas for my car, over a \$100 in books, expenses in food, and many other things.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of citizen scientists and how such movement is changing U.S.A. future. We want to be a part of such movement and we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of our communities.

Currently I can be educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115, with an increase in other services as well. This increased will be charged for every trimester commencing this august. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. This means that my Pell grant for tuition will not be enough to pay all trimesters of an academic year. Also, I will have to find a job while studying or post pone my education to get a job because I do not have the funds to pay the increased tuition and my parent cannot pay for me and my brother's tuition because of her low income. Also finding a job that pays well is hard to find now a day here in Puerto Rico, hence why maybe I will have to emigrate to the United States of America, so I can get a job to pay for the extra tuition that my Pell grant won't be able to cover like, for example books.

Also, unlike me, a lot of students do not receive the Pell grant. Some students must work while they study and because they cannot pay the tuition, they need to work at two or three jobs to get enough money, so they can pay their tuition and study. These students also need to pay for their books, their housing because they live far from the campus and they need to stay somewhere near, they also need money for food and other expenses. Few students get help from their parents, because their families have other expenses they need to pay and a lot of these families do not have enough money to pay their children tuition.

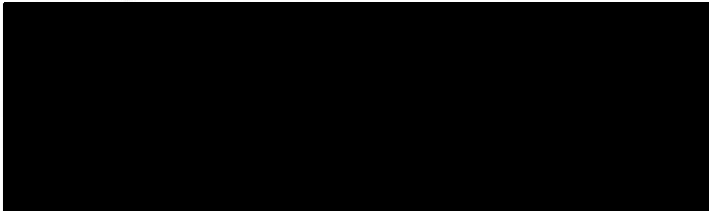
My petition is simple. I would like to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system an essential service to Puerto Rico and for the BTU members to design a program that will protect the rights of the low-



income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to have a full education. They should legislate the elimination of administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thank you for your attention to this matter. All students only have two months to find a solution to this problem.

Noemily Ortiz Rolón

Noemily Ortiz Rolón





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 17, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

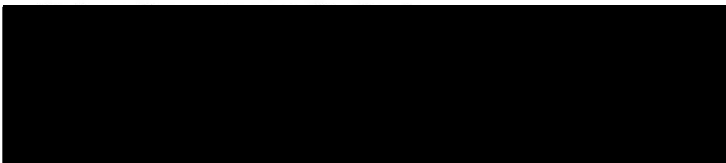
As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course I have learned about the relevance of Citizen Scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. I want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my fourth year of the General Biology Program. I am a first generation student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I live in the mountains of Juncos and still today in my house we do not have electricity. I receive a Pell Grant support of \$5,600 per year but my expenses include: registration, transportation, books and food. I currently have \$2,500 left for the year in my Pell and due to the new raise in registration I will be left to zero on the first week of classes next semester.

As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. How do I pay for transportation, food, materials? The University says they will provide a way but I do not know who to ask for such money. I will need to get a job but in Juncos, Puerto Rico the unemployment rate is 16% so finding a job is not easy.

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system an essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not to affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with whoever is needed and evaluate whatever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

  
Diane M. Perez Lopez







Miércoles, 16 de mayo de 2018

Honorable Jueza Taylor Swain  
Palacio de Justicia de los Estados Unidos  
Nueva York, NY 10007

Estimada Jueza Taylor:

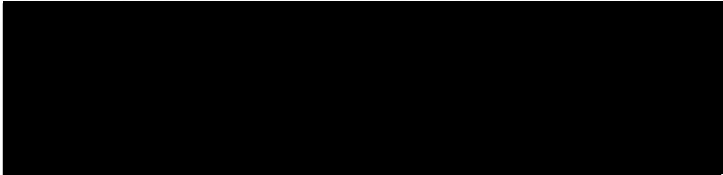
Mi nombre es Marialis Nieves Ramos, tengo 24 años de edad y soy estudiante subgraduada de la Universidad de Puerto Rico-Humacao. Actualmente curso mi último año de Bachillerato en el Programa de Biología General del Recinto. Soy natural del área rural del pueblo de Canóvanas. Provengo de un hogar donde el ingreso es inferior a \$20,000 por año. Soy, junto a mis dos hermanas, primera generación en cursar estudios a nivel de bachillerato; ya que nuestros padres no tuvieron esa oportunidad, en parte, debido a sus escasos recursos económicos. Recibo una subvención de beca Pell de \$2,960.00, la cual distribuyo entre mis gastos de transportación, comida, vestimenta, libros, copias y demás materiales necesarios para mi educación.

Como parte de nuestro curso de Biología Molecular y Celular, hemos aprendido acerca de la relevancia de los científicos Ciudadanos y cómo ese movimiento está cambiando el futuro de los EE. UU. Queremos ser parte de ese movimiento, creemos que es importante servir a Puerto Rico no solo como científicos, sino también como miembros activos de sus comunidades.

Actualmente he podido educarme gracias a las bajas tarifas de registro del sistema UPR. Como una solicitud de la Junta de Administración y Supervisión Financiera (FOMB), la Junta de Fideicomisarios de la UPR (BTU) aumentó el crédito de \$ 55 a \$ 115 con un aumento en otros servicios también. Ninguna de estas desiciones afecta a los administradores y sus salarios. Aunque, tal vez, con el favor de Dios, estoy próxima a culminar parte de mis estudios; intento hacer oír mi voz por este medio, ya que planeo continuar formándome como profesional dentro del sistema UPR. También, porque tengo dos hermanas que permanecen estudiando en el sistema; así como otros familiares cercanos y amistades que continúan luchando por educarse. Esto significa para muchos estudiantes, tener que usar toda su beca Pell en solo dos meses; teniendo muchos que optar por conseguir un trabajo adicional o posponer su educación ya que no tienen los fondos.

Mi petición es simple de solicitar a la FOMB que considere el sistema UPR y el servicio esencial para Puerto Rico y que los miembros de BTU diseñen un programa que proteja el derecho de las familias de bajos ingresos de la región sureste de Puerto Rico a una educación. Deben legislar para eliminar puestos administrativos y no afectarnos a nosotros ni a nuestros campus. Estoy disponible para reunirme con quien sea que sea necesario y evaluar cualquier cambio que se proponga para el plan actual. Gracias por su pronta atención a este asunto.

Marialis Nieves Ramos





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 15, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the General Biology Bachelor. Since I am studying, every year I receive partially the Pell Grant. But my house income is not enough to all my expenses, even more, my sister will start the University soon. I live in a rural area in Puerto Rico, Rio Grande and I must drive every single day to the University because I can not pay for lodging. Also, I have other expenses that include: meals, book and other stuff for the University.

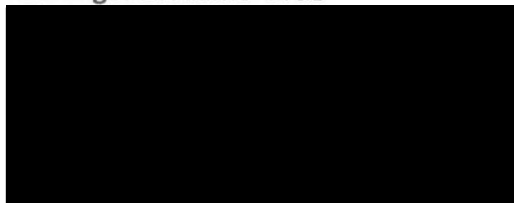
As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees and accessibility of the UPR system. The Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) requested to implement an increase of the credit from \$55 to \$115. Also, they requested to increase other services in the University. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. With this increase I cannot be able in enrollment. Because I will be going to need to get a job/s or a loan because my family and I do not have the funds. In that case I do not know I will going to do if stay here or emigrate to US.

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system. Because UPR is an essential service to Puerto Rico for low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to get an education of excellent. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or the different campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your attention about this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Álamo Ortiz", written in a cursive style.

Sarangélica Álamo-Ortiz







BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 10, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am a senior undergraduate student pursuing a B.Sc degree at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao. Through the Molecular and Cell Biology course I learned about the relevance of scientific citizens and how they are changing the future of the US. I have become interested in taking part of such movement since I believe it is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of the community.

Being exposed to mainland universities through internships has made me aware of the sole reason of why I will be able to soon achieve a bachelor degree, it is affordable. Even though the UPR system has very low credit fees (\$55), I was capable of being a full-time student while defraying my costs of housing, transportation, food and books by receiving the Federal Pell Grant support due to low household income.

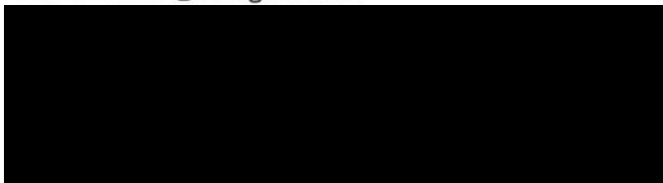
As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) the credit fee will increase from \$55 to \$115 in line with an increase in other services as well. It should be noted that these upcharges do not affect the administrative faculty and their salaries. This augmentation by more than 100% will consequently force students to get a job in a country with a high unemployment rate to subsist and fund their education. Although loans are a solution, this would compel students to emigrate to have a debt in a state with a more consistent and balanced economy. Puerto Rico would lose great minds that would otherwise nurture the island, and families will needlessly be divided.

My petition is simple:

I request the FOMB to take in regard the UPR system and its essential service to Puerto Rico. Furthermore, BTU members ought to design a program with the intent of protecting the right to education of low-income Puerto Rican families. A legislation should be pursued that eliminates repetitive, and non-necessary, administrative positions rather than affect access to a professional degree. I am available to meet with whoever is needed to help evaluate changes proposed to the current plan. I will appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, since the students only have a month to enroll.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Santy" or "Santiago", written in a cursive style.

Leeza Marie Santiago Millán





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 11, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao coursing my last year of the General Biology curriculum. I'm currently working as a research assistant/ study coordinator in a research program offered in one of Puerto Rico's hospital, VA Caribbean Healthcare System. I live in rural Humacao, where the basic resources are still failing. Water and electricity come and go more times than we can count. I receive a Pell Grant support just right to fit the needs for paying my semesters in the UPR system, buying books and essentials and getting me to the investigation I've worked so hard at this past year.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. This means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or delay my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will move with my family to South Carolina or Virginia area.

My petition is simple, to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Douglas M. E. Rivera Agosto

*Douglas M. E. Rivera Agosto* 11/05/2018







May 9, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

*"To defend a country you need an army, but to defend a civilization you need education"*  
-Jonathan Stacks

My name is Elisha S. Jiménez. I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao (UPRH). I'm currently a few weeks away from finishing my fourth year of my baccalaureate in Science with concentration in Microbiology. Currently, my father and my sister are also pursuing their degrees in UPRH. My house income is lower than \$30,000 per year. Both of my parents are incapacitated by the Social Security Administration, because of this I'm able to receive a full Pell Grant support which is used to cover my tuition. Thanks to the affordable tuition on UPRH, I'm still able to receive a grant surplus which helps me cover most of my expenses; that include but is not limited to transportation, books, school materials, lunch and clothing.

In our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Scientific Citizens and how such movement is changing the future of the U.S.A. I want to become part of such movement, I believe it's important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of our communities.

Like I mentioned earlier, I'm currently able to attend college and become educated thanks to the low tuition fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) imminently increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. This request is becoming effective in August 2018, less than two months from now. What concerns us, as citizens, is that none of these decisions seem to affect the administrations or their salaries. Which means that starting August my Pell grant won't be enough. I will need to get an additional job or simply postpone my education since my parents won't be able to afford sending me and my sister to college. My petition to you is simple: (i) To request the FOMB to consider and declare the UPR system an essential service to Puerto Rico, (ii) And for the BTU members, to design a program that will protect the right to an education for the low-income families of Puerto Rico.

Elisha S. Jiménez Acosta





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 7, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao, in my last year of the General Biology. I am a first-generation student as neither of my parents finished high school. My house income is lower than 15,000 per year. It became imperative for me to get a part-time job while getting my B.A so I could eat. I have a job in a retail store that is 51 minutes away from campus. I must travel every day for 51 minutes to get to work but it provides me money for food and gas. I receive a Pell Grant support of \$5,500, approximately but my expenses include: \$240 in monthly transportation, \$200 in books, \$100 in food, \$103 in utility bills and \$100 in miscellaneous expenses, among others.

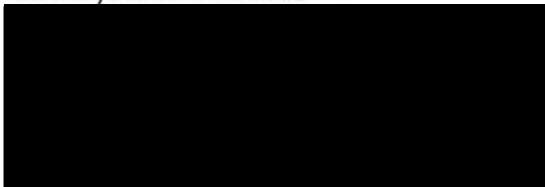
As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course it has come to my attention the relevance of being a Citizen scientist and how such movement is important for perpetuating a change. In order to serve Puerto Rico, we must become a part of that movement because it is important to be a scientist aware of its social environments by being active members of our community.

The only way I had been able to manage work and attend university was thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. These changes directly affect students, not the inefficient administration. As an economically struggling student, I will need to get an additional job or postpone my education as I do not have the funds. We will be forced to search for more affordable options and even emigrate.

My petition is simple: UPR system needs to be classified an essential service to Puerto Rico as it is a tool for the development of the most-needed professionals and a tool for social movement. I urge BTU members to design a program that will protect the right of the low-income families of Puerto Rico to access higher education. They should legislate to eliminate inefficient administrative positions, not burden poor students like me. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Rivera Navedo".

Samarys Rivera Navedo







BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 5, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

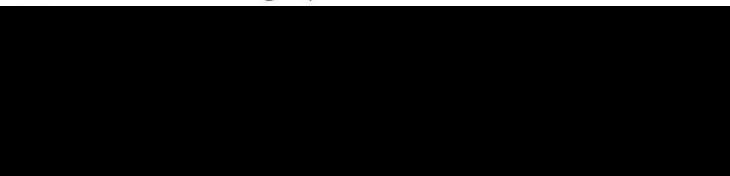
I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the General Biology. I am a first generation American lower than 20,000 per year. I live in rural Humacao, I receive a Pell Grant support of 2,950 but my expenses include: transportation, books, and food.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will immigrate with my family to New York

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Student Name: Gregory A. Ramos Natal



*Gregory A. Ramos*

Students Signature



BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 5, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

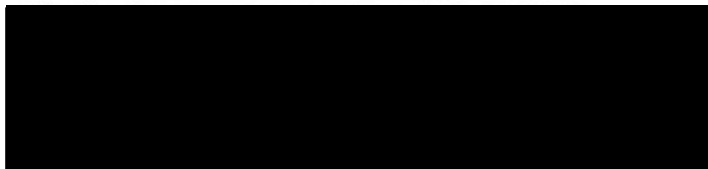
I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the Application of Physics and Electronics. I am a third generation student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I live in Fajardo. I receive a Pell Grant support of 1,800 but my expenses include: transportation, books and supplies.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will emigrate with my family to Florida/Ney York/Philadelphia...

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Student Name: Carlos Jose Dieppa Rios



  
Students Signature





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 5, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

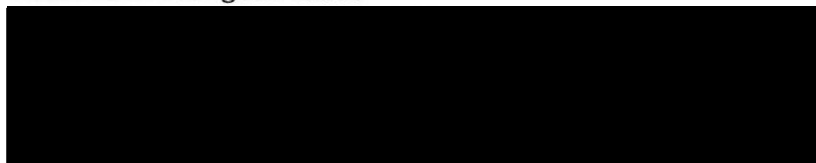
I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the Microbiology. I am a second generation student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I am one of the group of students that receive a Pell Grant scholarship due to the low incoming of my household. My expenses include books, notebooks, other university material and transport due to the fact that I cannot afford renting an apartment near by

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Currently I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these desitions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will emigrate with my family to Florida/Ney York/Philadelphia...

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. I am available to meet with who ever is needed and evaluate what ever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Gabriela I. Rodriguez Leduc



*Gabriela Rodriguez Leduc*



BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 5, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao in my third year of the General Biology major. I am a single mom student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I live in rural Humacao, Puerto Rico and I come from a low-income family. I receive a Pell Grant support of \$2,960.00 but my expenses include money for transportation, books, academic materials, cell phone, food, amongst others.

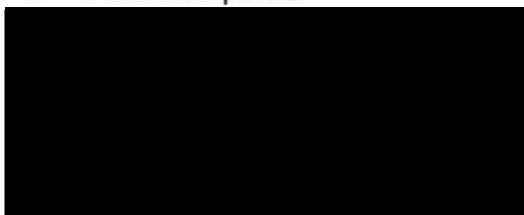
As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen scientists and how such movement is changing the United States future. We want to be a part of such movement, since we believe it is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Today, I am able to become educated thanks to the low registration fees of the UPR system. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services for the next semester. It is important to recall that these decisions do not affect the administrators and their salaries. This excessive rise means that I must use the money of my Pell Grant in only two months. Therefore, I will need to get an additional job or in the worst-case scenario postpone my education as I do not have the means necessary. For me, education is the key to a better future. Education is also the only possession that cannot be taken from us. Thus, it is important to have an educated country. Puerto Rico has a great percentage of low income families like mine. The only way they can become educated is by studying in the UPR system. Without adjustments or other methods to reduce this pay, none of us will have the opportunity to receive an education and pursue our dreams.

My petition is simple to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico to have an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our campuses. UPRH for example, has most of the students from the Humacao area and they do not possess transportation. If the campus were to close, they would not have the opportunity to relocate to another campus. It is important to mention that our campus excels in preparing students to become successful professionals. We also excel in scientific and social research internationally. To further explain or talk about this matter, I am available to meet with any person needed and to evaluate any change is proposed to the current plan. Thank you for your prompt attention in this matter. I hope you can make our voice heard.



Yaniris Molina Aponte



*Yaniris Molina Aponte*



May 5, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor:

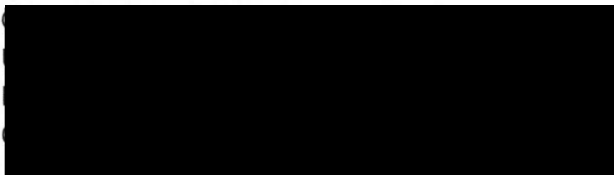
I am currently doing my bachelor's degree at the University of Puerto Rico-Humacao and this is my fourth year in the Department of General Biology. I am a first generation student and my house income is lower than 20,000 per year. I live in rural Las Piedras. It was not until the 17th of May that I got the electricity back in my house. I, along all residents in Puerto Rico, have suffered greatly because of hurricane Maria. I receive a Pell Grant full support that covers for my studies and gives me around \$1,000 to spend on necessities. But my life expenses include: \$15 weekly on transportation, over \$300 on books, \$30 weekly on meals. That amounts to \$1,200 for semester. I need to work outside the university to gain some extra money which will affect my academic performance. I currently have a GPA of 2.80 because my adaptation to university was very hard. I did all my previous education in the public system and my Math and English skills were really poor when I enter the UPRH. That is why I need to focus into my studies and I prefer not to work outside.

As part of our Molecular and Cell Biology course we have learned about the relevance of Citizen Scientists and how such movement is changing the US future. We want to be a part of such movement, we believe is important to serve Puerto Rico not only as scientists but also as active members of their communities.

Thanks to the previous low costs of the classes in the UPRH system I have been able to stay studying. But if the costs keep raising even with my scholarship it will prove rather difficult for me to study and work many hours to pay the University. As a request of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) the Board of Trustees of the UPR (BTU) increased the credit from \$55 to \$115 with an increase in other services as well. None of these decisions affects the administrators and their salaries. These means I will need to use all my Pell grant in only two months, I will need to get an additional job or post pone my education as I do not have the funds. If I need to get a loan I prefer to do it in the US. Consequently, I will emigrate with my family members living in Florida, Ney York and Philadelphia.

I want to request the FOMB to consider the UPR system and essential service to Puerto Rico and for BTU members to design a program that will protect the right that the low-income families of the southeast region of Puerto Rico have to an education. They should legislate to eliminate administrative positions and not affect us or our registrations. I am available to meet with whoever is needed and evaluate whatever change is proposed to the current plan. Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. I only have two months to register.

Sincerely,  
*Luis A. Díaz Santiago*  
Luis A. Díaz Santiago





May 6, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain

Dear Judge Taylor Swain,

My name is Reinaldo Franqui Machin, I completed my bachelor's degree in Microbiology from The University of Puerto Rico, Humacao campus (UPRH) in 2012. I am writing this letter to express my concern regarding the plan of precipitated tuition increases for this public institution. Like other students, the relatively low cost of attendance of UPRH allowed me to enroll and complete my degree with minimal debt. I was not eligible to obtain financial aid due to house-hold income, but my mother is bedridden and has costly medical bills. Thus, the financial situation of my family required me to work a minimum wage job as I studied full time to pay for my own college degree. I was able to accomplish this because the government subsidized tuition provided me with a low cost of attendance at UPRH. This story is not unique, many students at UPRH come from underprivileged families and worked one or more jobs to pay for their education. Currently, Puerto Rico is under numerous economic recessions and the ever-climbing cost of living is already making it harder for students and their families to make ends meet. If this plan to double tuition comes to pass, many of these students will be cut off from obtaining high quality education. This will make it more difficult for them to obtain better paying jobs, which is crucial if we want to contribute to the island's shrinking economy.

Graduating with minimal debt made it permissible for me to follow my passion and enroll in a PhD program in Molecular Medicine, which I will graduate next week (May 11). PhD students work on the vanguard of science and technology, many of which make discoveries that create new markets and invigorate the economy. But PhD students have a modest salary, and large student loans due to a costly undergraduate education dissuade students from enrolling in these programs and becoming scientists. Puerto Rico needs these individuals to help create and maintain projects of innovation, it will strengthen the island's economy. I have already spoken with students and, unfortunately, they are becoming increasingly discouraged to begin or finish their studies due to the financial situation brought about by the island's debt crisis. Moreover, many of these students were heavily affected by Hurricane María, this further decreases their chances of having an affordable education.

I am afraid this substantial rise in tuition will also add to the existing problem of mass emigration from Puerto Rico. An incentive for the younger generation to stay is the low-cost education of the largest university on the island. Studying in Puerto Rico allows the students to better understand our local markets, build appropriate connections and networks to be successful in Puerto Rico. Otherwise, with such a sudden rise in tuition, aspiring students will continue to find other opportunities in the US mainland, further shrinking the island's economy and with it the hope for a prosperous Puerto Rico.

As I was finishing my PhD, I reflected on the importance of my affordable undergraduate education and it continues to influence my career. Due to my low student debt I have been able to accept an offer at Howard Law School to enroll in their JD program this Fall. I plan to pursue a career in Intellectual Property Law and Science Policy. Ultimately, I hope to collaborate with research intensive institutions on the island to promote their projects, patent them and find ways to turn their findings into businesses, which will help the island's economy grow. These are the types of opportunities students can pursue if they are not subjected to crushing student loans early in their careers. I am aware that big restructuring measures need to be taken in order to maintain the university viable. But I also understand that if we place all the financial burden in the pockets of these young students they will leave the island, further dwindling our middle class.

It's a difficult time for every Puerto Rican and making education affordable only to the wealthy will not contribute to solving the island's crisis. I implore to you, please mediate with the Financial Oversight and Management Board to help declare UPR as essential to the island so we can decrease (or hopefully stop) the severe austerity measures that will mostly affect the least privileged and those that have the most to lose.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RF' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Reinaldo Franqui Machin, PhD  
JD Candidate





BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT



May 25, 2018

Honorable Judge Taylor Swain,

I am writing with the respect that you deserve to explain several reasons why the Supervision Board is not making the best decisions regarding education in our island. I am currently an assistant professor in the Department of Biology of the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao (UPRH) and I am a product of the public schools of our country.

I am a first-generation student; my father only had an elementary school diploma and my mom never completed her high school. Even though we come from a low-income home, thanks to the UPR system me and my two sisters currently have a degree. When I was in high school I decided to apply to the Industrial Microbiology program at the University of Puerto Rico at Humacao. During my studies in this campus I obtained great knowledge, skills and I was exposed to the field of scientific research. Academic programs of the institution that promote intramural research such as Mc Nair and MARC were key to continue my graduate school studies. In addition, during the summers of 2008 and 2009 I did two internships at MIT and NASA, being the first student of the Department of Biology to be admitted to these programs.

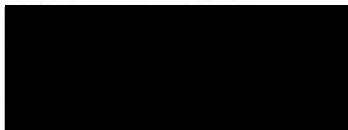
Not only this institution gave me the opportunity to prepare academically in the Bachelor of Science with a concentration in Microbiology (2005-2010), but also in the Doctorate in Biology of the UPR Rio Piedras (2010-2015) and the Post-doctorate of the Medical Sciences Campus of the UPR (2015). Like me, many students have been trained and are excellent professionals thanks to the UPR because it is the first university institution that serves east part of Puerto Rico.

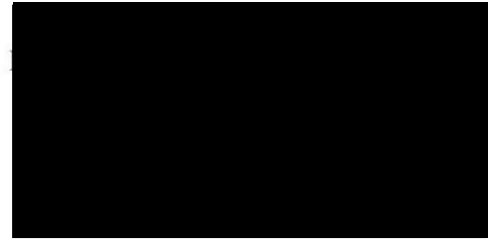
The changes promoted by the Supervision Board are not favorable for the education of thousands of young people with desire to complete a degree, but who do not have the resources to pay the expensive fees of a private university. Why Puerto Rican citizens have to migrate to receive education in other places? Why do our professionals have to leave without contributing their knowledge to our island? Today's decisions will affect us tomorrow. The UPR system is an essential core and all our institutions must remain open. The university must be promoted as the key to success for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "José L. Ortiz Lugo", is located below the "Sincerely," text.

José L. Ortiz Lugo, PhD





London, UK, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018

To:  
Honorable Judge Taylor Swain

**REF: Imminent raise in the registration costs at University of Puerto Rico (UPR)**

Dear Judge Taylor,

I am writing you in response to a request by Dr. Lilliam Casillas, Professor at UPRH which has kindly asked me to describe the importance that UPR had on the development of my career. I have immediately accepted this responsibility since my current position as an academic would not have been possible without the support and work done at UPR.

I do not want, neither I can, enter in merit of political and financial constrictions of the current situation in Puerto Rico with reference to the future of UPR, but I can definitively state that my career as an academic has been shaped by the post-doctoral position that I have covered at UPR-Humacao in 2008.

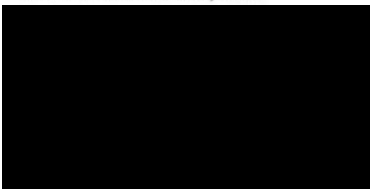
In that period, I had the privilege to work in a such inspiring environment, and I am worried that changes in the current structure would compromise the academic quality and accessibility of students to higher education despite their social origin. The success of my post-doctoral position was possible due to the chance to work with talented students, they helped with experiments and scientific discussions. All these students did not come from wealthy backgrounds, rather from some of the poorest area of Puerto Rico. Nevertheless their talent shaped my development as an early career scientist. Many of these students now hold a PhD or Post –doctoral positions in top-ranked Universities in the USA.

I would like to compare UPR with Universities in Italy, where I come from, where education is basically free (only minor fees are requested). Therefore, all population can afford it, despite to be rich, middle class or poor. Similarly, UPR has traditionally promoted social mobility in Puerto Rico. Recent studies in social science show that social mobility is the bulwark of democracy. Therefore the accessibility to education is a value that shapes our society to foster the development of the whole country.

Best regards,



Massimiliano Marvasi, PhD.



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**





Cincinnati, OH, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018

To:  
Honorable Judge Taylor Swain  
United States Courthouse  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Taylor,

My name is Cyd M. Castro Rojas and I currently am a research fellow at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Through this letter I am unifying with my undergraduate mentor, Dr. Lilliam Casillas Martinez, and her group by requesting your mediation on declaring the University of Puerto Rico essential to our island foundational progress. The proposed extreme measures against the public university system will hurt and truncate the economical and broad benefits it provides to all citizens.

The issue of limiting educational access to low-income students is of great importance to my family and me. Born and raised in the island, I am a first-generation college graduate coming from a low income, low education background. My parents, however, did encourage my siblings and me to push boundaries and pursue college educational goals that were only accessible to us through the University of Puerto Rico system. One fundamental role of the university, and that should always be protected, is its power to transform people's lives by being an anchor institution in the region.

The University of Puerto Rico transformed my life not only through the education I obtained but also through the impact of its research. By participating on undergraduate research, I was exposed to an enormous amount of knowledge and opportunities to do biomedical research. But more importantly, it created a strong foundation that allowed for my talent and potential to be recognized and put to good use. During graduate school I was able to develop animal models that allows for the improvement of medications treating multiple sclerosis and other autoimmune diseases. Furthermore, I currently hold a postdoctoral research position at a top leading pediatric research institution in the nation focusing on developing new treatment paradigms for organ transplantation. Without the strong education and support received at the University of Puerto Rico, I would have never been able to contribute so much scientific advancement to the society. I certainly look forward to joining and training a new set of scientists in my country.

Considering that access to the University of Puerto Rico should remain within reach to everyone, including talented students from low income backgrounds, our message is for the Financial Oversight and Management Board to re-evaluate and stop the enormous economic burden it has in plan for the students. To move forward with it will lead to a big loss of talent since most students will not be able to cover it. This can only lead to economic and social detriment for the island considering that the median household income in Puerto Rico for 2017 was of \$19,000. Therefore, an increase in registration costs without significant increase on income would take away the possibility of an education for talented students with low income backgrounds while benefiting only those with high income.



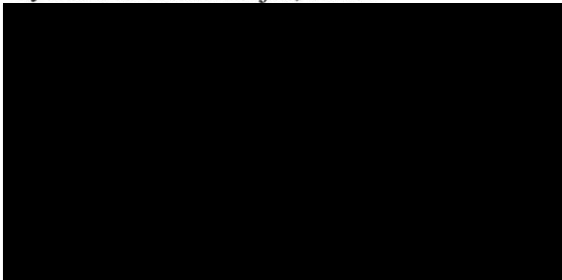
Please bring to the discussion other options at the administrative level that can target the current economy issue. Increasing fees to students at the University of Puerto Rico will nullify the right of access to college education for most Puerto Ricans, perpetuating poverty and social issues in the island.

We hope your response align with the student's response at the University of Puerto Rico that are hungry for a strong education and opportunities, as well as our country that needs professionals to grow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Cyd Marie Castro Rojas", is located below the "Sincerely," text. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cyd Marie Castro Rojas, Ph.D.







**INTER AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO**  
**Fajardo Campus**  
**Science and Technology Department**  
**Biology Program**

May 23, 2018

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am a professor at the Department of Science and Technology at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico. I am writing in response to a petition from my former mentor, now colleague and friend, Dr. Casillas. I graduated from the University of Puerto Rico and obtained a BS in Microbiology from the UPR- Humacao and also graduated in 2013 from my Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the UPR-Medical Sciences campus. I am very grateful for all the opportunities that I had in research and academic setting thanks to the University of Puerto Rico. Thanks to this high quality research training now I am also training other students in Nanomedicine research.

Now, our "alma mater" is now suffering increases in their registration fees and high cuts on its budget. We are very worried about this situation and request your mediation for the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) to declare the University of Puerto Rico as an essential service to the island and that way stop the extreme measurements taken against our public university system.

I am the first Ph.D. in my entire family. I come from a low-income home, but thanks to the UPR system me and my two sisters currently have a degree. The University have helped us to get the education to obtain the jobs to help our community and country. This is also the case for many students that want to contribute with their talents, innovative ideas and scientific knowledge once they graduate.

We hope you take into consideration our petition. For further information, please contact me at [REDACTED] or cell phone [REDACTED]

Cordially,

Millie L. González, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]